

Old Fire House to Get New Inspection

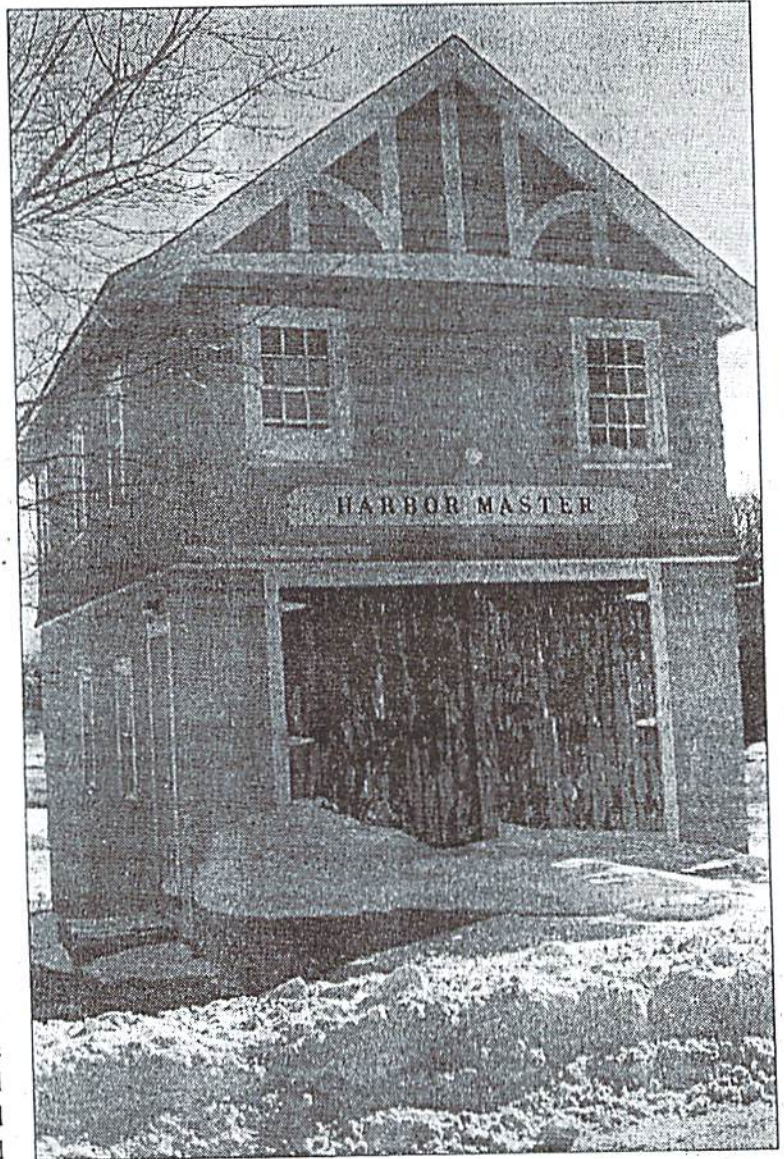
By KEITH L. MARTIN

The community preservation committee would like to see a former firehouse used as more than an overgrown birdhouse.

To do this, the committee has approved funds for an inspection of the former Bluefish River Firehouse to see how much it would cost to renovate the longtime fixture on Washington Street.

At their Friday meeting, CPC Chairwoman Holly Morris said that the Department of Public Works has included around \$16,000 for renovations to the building as part of their capital budget for next year, but approached the committee about using Community Preservation Act funds instead.

CPC and historical commission member Tony Kelso said that information he and a consultant have gathered shows that the building dates back to 1906 when it originally stood on St. George Street near the old library that predates the Wright Building. In 1908, said Kelso, the structure was moved to Washington Street and served as one of three fire stations for the town up until 1967. It then assumed its current role as a storage facility for vehicles and materials for the harbormaster's office.



The community preservation committee will conduct an inspection of the Bluefish River Fire House for future renovation of the nearly 100-year-old structure.

The building currently features many holes in its corner boards large enough for birds to fly through and other birds have taken up residence under the building as well.

Morris said that since the building is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, it cannot become a meeting place and has no utilities. She did, however, see the value in preserving the structure.

"I can't imagine that area of Duxbury without that building," she said. "[DPW Manager of Buildings and Grounds] Peter Buttkus would like to see the area used as a park with benches in the future and I know it serves as a bus stop for some children."

Morris said that while she hasn't gotten firm numbers on the cost for renovations, she was able to secure a spot on the Annual Town Meeting warrant to vote on allocating CPA funds for the project.

Finance committee member Mark Mahoney said that the DPW had approached his group about financing as part of their capital budget and that funds were to plug holes and fix rotting areas to "keep the building standing."

Fellow finance committee member Maxene Armour said that she didn't see the value of spending lots of money "for a building we can't get much use out of."

Pat Loring of the CPC said that in order to get a better estimate of what issues the building has and what repairs are needed, perhaps the committee could fund the equivalent of a home inspection on the structure, a goal that could be achieved with six weeks until Annual Town Meeting to get a better cost estimate.

The board agreed and voted unanimously to spend up to \$400 from their administrative funds to conduct the inspection and get a better cost estimate on what repairs the building needs.

Selectman Betsy Sullivan added that if the CPC doesn't fund the maintenance costs, the issue may still come before citizens as part of the DPW's capital budget request.

In other business at Friday's meeting, the CPC:

- Voted unanimously to reject an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant to use Community Preservation Act funds to study restoration of the north brick wall of the Duxbury Free Library. CPC member Pat Loring said that she felt that the request, for \$6,500, was a maintenance issue and said it should have been done as part of the original restoration of the structure and not done now with CPA funds.

- Approved a motion for Annual Town Meeting Article 5, that deals with the operating budget of the town, to use five percent of CPA receipts

and five percent of the state match for administrative purposes. The motion received unanimous support.

- Voted to indefinitely postpone Article 13 of March's Annual Town Meeting, to purchase land in town for open space. The discussion of numerous executive sessions over the past few months, the committee felt it was not ready for the March meeting and would need more time.

- Discussed planning for their February 9 public hearing on CPC-sponsored Town Meeting warrant articles, to be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Mural Room at Town Hall.